



SUCCESS STORY

Land Titling Secures a Hopeful Future

Rural workers receive land titles to promote licit economy in coca-growing areas



Julio Jankoña, a Bolivian rural worker, proudly shows his legal land titles

With the support of indigenous rural workers, private investors and USAID, the Bolivian Government is working to increase licit crops in the country

Julio Jankoña, a rural Bolivian farmer living in an area in the heart of counter narcotics efforts in Bolivia, has a good reason to smile: President Eduardo Rodríguez has given him a land title that grants legal ownership of the land Julio and his family have been working since he was a child.

“We waited 20 years to see this come true. Now we own our land”, said Julio, while proudly showing the title to his family’s 18 acres of land.

By the end of 2006, some 17,000 people in the Chapare will also be proud land title holders for the first time in their lives. This is a modest but important step in a country where access to land is one of the most critical political issues and principal causes of inequality.

With USAID support, the Bolivian government is carrying out an ambitious land titling and property rights regulation plan to address poverty and inequity. The program has already made important contributions, such as reducing the processing time for land titling from 30 to less than 4 months.

In the coca-growing region of the Chapare, the land titling initiative is part of a broader program of Integrated Alternative Development that contributes to the Bolivian government’s counter narcotics strategy. Complementing the efforts of private investment and local communities, the Bolivian Government is transforming the coca-production zone into areas for licit economic growth and social development. Access to health care, justice and greater participation in local governments are also important parts of the integrated alternative development approach.

Legal crops in the Chapare have grown 33% in the past four years to more than 350,000 acres. Banana exports, one of the most successful local products, are at 2.3 million boxes per year, almost eight times more than in 2000. The region’s natural beauty and well-developed rural road networks bode well for the future development of the local tourism industry.

People like Julio Jankoña, a proud first time land owner, have good reason to be hopeful about their futures. The land is already theirs.